

CHAPTER 2

THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

2-1. Qualifications/Responsibilities. Prior to the development of a volunteer management plan, a project manager or office chief must select an individual on his/her staff to be the volunteer program coordinator - in other words, the team member who will "quarterback" the volunteer program. This designation should be made after a great deal of deliberation. A volunteer coordinator should have the following prerequisites:

- o Have a thorough knowledge of the mission of the office or project, both actual and potential, and the tasks needed to accomplish it.

- o Have a "volunteer mind-set." He/she must be an individual who is continually analyzing the worksite and workload to determine which jobs could, and perhaps should, be accomplished by either volunteers or hosted program workers.

- o Be a long-range planner. He/she must be constantly analyzing needs and ways to address them. Such an individual has to be sympathetic to the needs of the project staff, the needs of the resources managed, the needs of the public, and the needs of current and potential volunteers.

- o Believe that volunteerism is good, not only for the agency and the country, but for each individual volunteer.

- o Recognize potential in individual volunteers and how to elicit enthusiasm for the job at hand.

- o Be able to assess the kind of training needed by individual volunteers and be able to provide it or arrange for it to be provided.

- o Have knowledge of the local community and the ability to develop helpful contacts for volunteer recruitment.

- o Have the ability to organize time so that both ordinary and extraordinary responsibilities are adequately met. Volunteer coordinator's positions are a collateral duty. Unfortunately, no Corps office or project can afford the luxury of having one staff member dedicated entirely to volunteer coordination duties.

2-2. Volunteer Thinking. It is imperative that the coordinator be able to think like a volunteer. Those who get paid to manage natural resources may have trouble thinking like someone who will do that work for free. The volunteer coordinator must be able to ask him/herself these questions:

- o What kind of jobs would I do for free?
- o How would I like to be treated if I were donating my time?
- o What kinds of recognition would be important to me?
- o What benefits would I like to have if they were available?
- o What training would I need to do the work?

If a coordinator can answer these questions, he/she will be well on the way to designing an effective volunteer program.